



Iowa Status

common; native

Iowa Range

statewide

Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.
Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats CD-ROM.

eastern mole

Scalopus aquaticus

Kingdom: Animalia
Division/Phylum: Chordata - vertebrates
Class: Mammalia
Order: Insectivora
Family: Talpidae

Features

The eastern mole is 5 1/2 to eight inches long. It is covered with short, grayish-brown velvety fur. The tops of the feet are white. The big claws and paddle like front feet are used for digging. The nose is long and hairless. The short tail (one to 1 1/2 inches) has few hairs.

Natural History

The eastern mole lives in wooded areas, pastures, gardens, cemeteries, farm fields, and lawns with deep, loose soils. It eats mostly insects but will eat earthworms or any available food. Moles are insatiable eaters and in captivity consume on the average, the equivalent of one-half their body weight daily. It digs tunnels both just below the soil surface and at deeper levels. Digging is done with the front feet, using them to push aside soil. In good soil conditions, a mole can dig as much as 18 feet in an hour. Shallow tunnels are for finding food. Deeper burrows are for nesting and resting. A mole can turn around in a tunnel by completing a slow somersault. Not much is known about mole reproduction. The gestation period is one to two months. Young seem to be born between February and June.

Habitats

bottomland forests